Reflection

After reading the Saga, I wondered about a few things that were talked about. For instance, whenever the text mentioned someone going on a voyage, there were no dates. The text didn’t give any details about a month or a year, only seasons. I think its important to give actual dates because it adds to the legitimacy of the text and information, it adds to the proof of history. Usually when I think of history i think about dates, when this happened, when that happened. Ironically, the trend that I found fairly common, and the criticism I see a lot of authors bring up is the lack of time periods and dates throughout the Erik the Red saga. So, is it still history if it has no dates? In this particular case, no. I don’t think the Saga is history, to me its more-so a piece of Norse folklore-literature. Another trend that a lot of scholars discuss is the probability of Erik the Red being the first Norsemen to visit the mainland of Greenland. I myself questioned him being the first to settle on Greenland, so I researched it and found that most scholars use the Erik the Red Saga as evidence that he was. But a lot of sources suggest that its highly unlikely that he was the true first settler or first Norseman to set foot on Greenland. Some sources that i found argue that even if Erik the Red was really the first settler, the actual temperatures of Greenland were pretty cold and harsh and the isolation of Greenland from other land meant he would have had to have been a very good farmer, and been self sufficient. The scientific studies and temperatures as well as the land suggest of Greenland suggest that it was possible to cultivate.

Query

At the start of my research, I came to it already with initial questions about the dates and durations of travel. Although, as I have delved deeper into more of the information rather than the actual text and opinions of scholars and factual scientific information. I wondered if Erik the Red really could have comfortably settled on Greenland being so isolated form everyone else, and I wondered how long were these voyages that Erik the Red and Karlsefni would take? In particular when Karlsefni finds and stays on for a while, they didn’t give a time frame. Also about the way of life of these Norsemen, when Karlsefni is on his way back home, he stumbles across from natives and captures the children only to bring them back to Erik the Red and teach them their language and their religion, why would they do this? One very interesting source that I found suggested the possibility of Erik the Red being the first Norsemen to actually set foot not he mainland. Obviously everyone at this time is sailing and discovering and expanding all over the place. How is it that Erik the Red is the only one mentioned to ever set foot this land first? The most confusing things in Saga are the history disagreements and the time frames. For instance who was the true Founder that set foot on Greenland, and how long were these voyages that Erik the Red would take?

Annotated Bibliography

Bichet, Vincent; Gauthier, Emilie; Massa, Charly; Perren, Bianca; Richard, Hervé; Petit, Christophe; Mathieu, Olivier. "The History and Impacts of Farming Activities in South Greenland: An Insight from Lake Deposits." *ProQuest Research Library [ProQuest].* Bonnier Corporation

 N.p., July 2013. Web. 21 Oct. 2015.

"Taking advantage of the warm medieval climate, Erikur Rauðe Þorvaldsson (Erik the Red) led a group of Icelandic farmers to southwest Greenland. The first and most important Norse settlement (the so-called 'eastern settlement') is situated around 61°N, at the head of fjords of the Narsaq district .”

This source took a scientific perspective on Erik’s ability to farm on Greenland and if it was actually possible to cultivate on Greenland. Very important to prove whether Erik was able to survive on Greenland or not.

Brun, Eske. "Greenland." Arctic 19.1 (1966): 62-69. *JSTOR.* Web. 06 Oct. 2015.

“About a thousand years ago Greenland was sighted from the East by an Icelander by the name of Gunnbjorn, but the first European to set foot on the land was Erik the Red from Iceland.”

This quote is from the text "Greenland" by Eske Brun. This also states that Erik first settled on Greenland. Although it clears up that he definitely wasn't the first to spot the land as I'm sure other Vikings may have explored near the vicinity of that land. For me, this helped me to believe in the actual text, seeing other people say that Erik also first settled on Greenland made it more believable and factual in my mind.

Elling, Henrik. "ICE AGE: Conquered the Vikings." *ProQuest Research Library.* Bonnier Corporation, Nov.-Dec. 2012. Web. 26 Oct. 2015.

"Led by Erik the Red, the Vikings founded the Eastern Settlement. There Erik built his farm, Brattahlid, while his wife, Thjodhilde, a Christian convert, convinced the community to build the New World's first church. The settlement expanded quickly; farms sprang up around the central compound. Within a few years, the newcomers established a second community, the Western Settlement, and although it never grew as large as its earlier counterpart, the inhabitants thrived, as evidenced by the remains of at least 95 farms that archaeologists have so far uncovered.”

In this source, the scholar talks about the uprising of christianity in Greenland and the building of the first christian church. It also talks about how the settlement prospers and quickly expands and how newcomers decide to travel to Greenland.

Friis, Herman R. "Greenland: A Productive Arctic Colony." Economic Geography 13.1 (‍1937‍): 75-92. JSTOR. Web. 06 Oct. 2015.

"Commercial relations between Green- land and the Scandinavian countries, and the attendant settlement of Green- land by the Scandinavians has been more or less continuous since the initial establishment of colonies in the southern part by Erik the Red at the close of the tenth century. However, there have been periods since the founding of these settlements during which Greenland was left completely isolated from the world outside.”

I picked this piece of information, or text because to me it was factual scientific information about Greenland and how the land actually was and the climate of the land. When I read this article I was thinking about how difficult and hard it would be to settle at the time Erik the Red did and the amount of agricultural skills you would need to be able to farm in cold climate. This quote says to me‍,‍ that Erik would had to have been fairly powerful and wealthy and to have pillaged other villages or settlements to replenish his supplies and food to keep his people alive.

Knausgaard, Karl Ove. "MY SAGA, PART 1." *ProQuest Research Library.* Bonnier Corporation

 N.p., 1 Mar. 2015. Web. 24 Oct. 2015.

“ They must have wondered about the source of the continental driftwood that came ashore in Greenland. And if they didn't intentionally sail farther west, driven by need or lust for adventure, chances are good that they got there by accident: They had neither magnetic compass nor sextant, but navigated by the sun and stars, and in fog, which there is a lot of in these waters, they often drifted far off course. According to the two Icelandic sagas that deal with the discovery of the new continent, "The Saga of the Greenlanders" and "The Saga of Erik the Red," this is exactly how it happened. "

This scholar brings up the idea of chance. How Erik the Red and other travelers and no instruments of navigation, they merely went with the direction of the wind and the way of the current of the open sea. I thought this was important because to me it says that it was possible for Erik to find Greenland or land on it, but to me it suggests that theres also that same chance for every other traveler passing by.

Mowat, Farley. West Viking: The Ancient Norse in Greenland and North America. Toronto: McClelland, Stewart, 1965. Print.

“Although most authors appear to believe that Erik was the first Norsemen to visit the mainland coast of Greenland, the probabilities are overwhelmingly in favor of there having been a good many previous voyages during the century or more between Gunnbjorn’s accidental voyage and Erik’s intentional one. “

Mowat, Farley. West Viking: The Ancient Norse in Greenland and North America. Toronto: McClelland, Stewart, 1965. Print.

"Gardar is said to have discovered Iceland - perhaps as early as 877."

Randall, Hyman. "No Classmates for Andrine." *ProQuest Research Library*. Bonnier Corporation

 N.p., Spring 2015. Web. 23 Oct. 2015.

" Finally, by measuring the radiocarbon content of successive growth increments, Wanamaker showed that the warming climate of the Viking era, which allowed Erik the Red to settle Greenland, was related to a shift In ocean currents unlike modern global warming.”

Smiley, Jane. The Sagas of the Icelanders: A Selection. London: Penguin, 2001. Print.

“They sailed along the coast to the western settlement, then to the Bear islands and from there with a northerly wind. After two days at sea they sighted land and rowed over in boats to explore it.”

This quote was found inside “Erik the Red Saga by Jane Smiley” which was sourced in the West Viking book by Farley Mowat.

Smith, Charles Sprague. "The Vinland Voyages." *Journal of the American Geographical Society of New York* 24 (‍1892‍): 510-35. JSTOR. Web. 06 Oct. 2015.

"He gave name to the land and called it Greenland and said that it would make men eager to go thither if the land had a good name."

Ideally when you’re reading literature you like to see evidence or some sort of citation when you hear about someone founding or first settling on land. In the Erik the Red text, it says that he not only first settled on Greenland but he also named it and speaks his ‍truth ‍about why he named it Greenland. When I read his reasoning, I thought that cannot be the real reason he named it Greenland. So when I found this ‍article ‍from Charles Sprague “The Vinland Voyages” ‍I read that he actually did name it Greenland and he really did name it Greenland to attract other explorers or settlers to make the land sound more pleasant.